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Everybody's Talking

Safe surprise: In the Vermilion Heritage Museum in Alberta, Canada, a heavy safe that had defied opening for over 40 years was casually unlocked by Stephen Mills, a visitor with no prior experience in safe-cracking. He spun the dial to a random combination, and to the shock of onlookers, the door swung open. Inside, instead of expected treasures, were merely some old restaurant order slips and a payroll sheet from the 1970s. The safe had been a challenging enigma for professional locksmiths and even the manufacturer, all of whom all tried and failed to unlock its secrets over the years, making the visitor's casual twist of fate all the more remarkable.

Lipstick lore: Ancient Iranians must have flaunted red lips over 3,600 years ago! The lip colouring emerged from a burial ground in Jiroft, in southeastern Iran, that had flooded and been looted, after which many items were recovered and taken to a local museum. This Bronze Age lipstick is a testament to timeless beauty. Resembling modern-day lipsticks, its hue comes from the mineral hematite, added to quartz, plant wax, and several ingredients that served as darkening agents. While its precise origins remain a mystery, experts believe it belonged to a local Bronze Age civilization. This discovery hints at the social dynamics of the area, where cosmetics played a role in power and authority.

Nature's shield: For years, experts have worried about the Great Wall of China succumbing to nature's relentless assault. New research unveils a surprising safeguard on earthen sections: a delicate layer of biocrust. Composed of cyanobacteria, moss, and lichen, this natural "living skin" shields the wall from wind and rain erosion. The portions of the wall built with compacted soil and gravel are vulnerable due to their material composition. But the biocrust acts as a natural armour, with some organisms secreting a cement-like substance that fortifies the structure. Tests reveal biocrust-covered areas boast increased strength and stability, offering a glimmer of hope against the march of time.

Cat masterpiece: At an auction in New York (U.S.), the "world's largest cat painting" sold for \$826,000 (USD). The weight of this mammoth piece, featuring 42 cats on a 6-by-8.5-foot (1.8-by-2.6-m) canvas, required a reinforced wall. Commissioned in the late 1800s by cat enthusiast Kate Birdsall Johnson, who pampered hundreds of feline residents at her summer estate, the painting portrays their luxurious lifestyle. Each cat had a name and recognized it when called, and they were attended by a team of servants. Johnson bequeathed \$500,000 in her will for her beloved cats' perpetual care. That was a purr-fectly extravagant gesture!

Quoteable Quotes

"People don't notice whether it's winter or summer when they're happy."
—Anton Chekhov

"Smile in the mirror. Do that every morning and you'll start to see a big difference in your life."
—Yoko Ono

What's Happening

Jun 12 - Stony Plain Meals on Wheels 45th Anniversary
SPMOW is marking its 45 year anniversary by holding a special celebration at the Family Connection Centre, 5600-50 Street, Stony Plain. The event is open to the Public on June 12, 2024 at 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Jun 14 to 16 - Summer Book Sale
Friends of the Spruce Grove Public Library. Sale hours are Friday 12-6, Saturday, 10-6, Sunday 12-4. Take what you want, pay what you can.

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Trivia

1. The capital of Greenland is Nuuk or Ilulissat?
2. Formicary is the technical term for anthill—T/F?
3. The Near Islands are near what land mass?
4. "The Fab Four" was the nickname of which rock group?
5. Which has approximately 27,000 teeth—earthworm or slug?

(Flip bottom of page for answers)

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Your Weekly Horoscope

ARIES (March 20 - April 19)
This year is a good opportunity to advance your purpose in this lifetime. However, now you may need to let go of whatever might be holding you back from doing so. Lucky numbers: 2, 8, 18, 24, 42, 44.

TAURUS (April 20 - May 20)
You may be tempted this week to be a couch potato and ignore your responsibilities. If you dig in, though, your hard work could pay off at the end of the week. Lucky numbers: 16, 20, 32, 33, 36, 39.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 20)
The middle of this week may be a good time to set a new intention. What would you like to focus on? Does this goal align with what you love and value? Lucky numbers: 1, 9, 14, 40, 43, 47.

CANCER (June 21 - July 22)
Are you feeling burned out? This weekend may be a good time for Cancer-borns to unplug and reduce your stress level. So focus on carving out space to do so. Lucky numbers: 5, 6, 34, 38, 47, 48.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22)
The expression of being "too clever by half" may be a risk for you in the next few weeks. Try to focus on honesty and integrity in your interactions with others. Lucky numbers: 8, 11, 29, 42, 43, 44.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Things may feel chaotic and in flux for the next few weeks, and you might receive a lot of new information. Carefully consider what to accept and what to reject. Lucky numbers: 11, 12, 15, 28, 31, 38.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)
On and off this year, you may find that your relationships are focal points for growth and transformation. Deep conversations now could be key to this process. Lucky numbers: 7, 17, 28, 32, 35, 41.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)
For the next few weeks, be careful of digging in your heels about your side of an argument. If you can't find a compromise, consider letting it go for the moment. Lucky numbers: 10, 12, 18, 27, 28, 44.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)
Sagittarians like having a coherent worldview. This week may reveal new information about what you believe. Should you incorporate these new ideas? Lucky numbers: 3, 8, 10, 15, 38, 48.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)
At week's end, you may feel that your head and heart are out of sync. How might you be able to create balance? If needed, take a deep breath and wait a few days. Lucky numbers: 4, 9, 19, 30, 38, 48.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)
Important insights may emerge from your unconscious early this week. Ignoring painful information might be tempting, but it could be a catalyst for transformation. Lucky numbers: 6, 9, 16, 26, 43, 46.

PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20)
Pisces are at the half-way mark of a two-plus-year period focused on your relationship to structure and the physical plane. What changes have occurred for you? Lucky numbers: 9, 13, 16, 20, 21, 47.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favour Gemini winners with the luckiest number being 9.

Did You Know...

Cute dolphins: Dolphins are commonly thought of as gray creatures. But the pink river dolphin has freshwater habitats throughout the Amazon and Orinoco river basins in South America. Their survival is under threat.

Quite the load: The annual wife carrying championship in Sonkajärvi, Finland, is a big deal. Since 1992, hundreds of couples have entered the race, with the husband carrying the wife in the 253.5-metre (831.7-ft.) course.

Long tresses: Empress Elisabeth of Austria, known as Princess Sisi, had ankle-length, auburn hair. She was proud of it, though its weight gave her headaches and her hairdresser spent up to three hours on it each day.

Rainbow mountain: Montaña de Siete Colores (Mountain of Seven Colors, or Rainbow Mountain) is a popular Peruvian Andes attraction. The 5,200-metre (17,000-ft.) mountain's appearance is due to 14 colourful minerals.

Flashes of love: Ever wonder why fireflies emanate flashes of light? Males use specific patterns when looking for mates. If a female flashes back, the twinkling conversation continues until they find each other.

On the Lighter Side

Only one large petal remained on the old rose. Last bud not least!

Magician: "I can turn this handkerchief into a flower."
Little boy: "That's nothing. I can walk down the street and turn into an alley."

Knock! Knock! *Who's there?* Vaughn. *Vaughn who?* Vaughn plus Vaughn equals two!

Why do hens lay eggs? If they dropped them, they'd break.

The earth's rotation really makes my day.

Answers

Trivia answers: 1. Nuuk 2. True 3. Alaska Peninsula 4. The Beatles 5. Slug

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